

VZCZCXRO2295
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #1483/01 1570748
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 060748Z JUN 09 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3363
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST 0054
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0097
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2014
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0156
RUEHTL/AMEMBASSY TALLINN 0025
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2//
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1943

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001483

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [ES](#) [RO](#) [AS](#) [UK](#)

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN PRESIDENT ATTENDS END OF MISSION CEREMONY
FOR ROMANIAN FORCES IN IRAQ

Classified By: Pol-Mil Minister Counselor Michael H. Corbin for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Romanian President Basescu presided over a ceremony on June 4 at COB Adder, Tallil to commemorate the End of Mission (EOM) for Romanian forces in Iraq. The ceremony included a wreath-laying in honor of three Romanian soldiers who died in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). President Basescu met briefly with the Ambassador and the CG after the ceremony, thanking them for their strong support of Romanian forces deployed in Iraq and remarking that Romania's experience in Iraq and Afghanistan had been invaluable to the training and development of its forces. As one of the last remaining Coalition partners, Romania's departure marks an end to an important multilateral military effort in support of OIF. The GOI has been reluctant to sign bilateral security agreements (with the exception of the UK); however, will continue to press the GOI on the value of such alliances - particularly with those countries that stood with them in OIF. End Summary.

12. (C) Romanian President Traian Basescu, Minister of Defense Mihai Stanisoara and Chief of General Staff Admiral Gheorghe Marin visited Iraq on June 4 to attend the Romanian EOM ceremony at COB Adder, Tallil. The Ambassador, Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I) Commanding General (CG) Raymond Odierno, Multi-National Corps Iraq (MNC-I) CG Chuck Jacoby and NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) Deputy CG Italian General Paolo Bosotti represented the Coalition at the Ceremony. Iraqi Ministry of Defense Chief of Staff of Joint Headquarters Babakir Zebari and Iraqi Ground Forces Commander General Ali Ghaydan represented Baghdad and the Governor of Muthana province and the Provincial Council Chair of Dhi Qar province also attend the ceremony along with a large number of local sheikhs and local Iraqi Security Force representatives. President Basescu congratulated his forces for their significant achievements and great sacrifices in Iraq, reciting the names of the three Romanian soldiers who died in support of OIF. President Basescu, the Ambassador and CG, and Iraqi General Babakir each laid wreaths on a memorial to the fallen Romanian soldiers. The Romanian delegation presented commendations to the Romanian forces. The ceremony concluded with the lowering of the Romanian flag, symbolizing the end of the Romanian mission in Iraq.

13. (C) Since August 2003, Romania has deployed over 5,000 troops in support of OIF. Three Romanian soldiers were killed and 12 were wounded in Iraq. Romanian forces were involved in full-spectrum combat operations, training, civil capacity building, and intelligence support during their almost six years in Iraq. They had excellent relations with the GOI and a Romanian General served as the coordinator of

all coalition operations in the MNF-I Plans division. Romania was one of five Coalition partners invited by the GOI to remain beyond the expiration of the UN mandate in December 2008. All Romanian forces, save three personnel assigned to NTM-I, will depart Iraq by July 31.

14. (C) After the EOM ceremony, President Basescu met briefly with the Ambassador and the CG. President Basescu thanked the Ambassador and the CG. President Basescu thanked the Ambassador and CG for U.S. support of Romanian forces during their deployment to Iraq. The Ambassador remarked that Romania was a strong NATO ally and that its significant achievements had contributed greatly to the success of OIF. CG Odierno added that he had worked with Romanian Forces for many years in Iraq and that they were always exceedingly professional and committed to the mission. He described Romanians as true partners who had stood shoulder to shoulder with U.S. and formed a special bond. President Basescu said as commander-in chief, it was important that the army is trained in real conditions and tested on the battlefield. President Basescu remarked that Romania's experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has been invaluable to their military's training and development. CG responded that the Romanian Army has the "Warrior ethos," noting that this cannot be said of all U.S. partners.

15. (C) President Basescu questioned whether Iraq was capable of providing for its own security, in light of the drawdown of Coalition forces and owing to the inexperience of the Iraqi Army - after being rebuilt since 2003. The CG replied that many Iraqi soldiers, particularly in the senior ranks, had fought in the Iran-Iraq war and were experienced. The CG

BAGHDAD 00001483 002 OF 002

said that the Iraqi Army was increasingly capable and he believed that they would be able manage security in Iraq. President Basescu commented that the CG's optimism made him feel more confident about Iraq's future.

16. (C) Comment: The Romanian EOM ceremony - to be closely followed by the Australian ceremony - represents the drawing to a close of an important multilateral military effort by our allies in Iraq in support of U.S. objectives. If the GOI implements a security agreement with the UK to include the naval training mission (as now appears likely) at least one bilateral security relationship has been established. Unfortunately the GOI was reluctant to invest the effort required to conclude agreements with any of the other forces that served in support of OIF. We will continue to look for opportunities to press the GOI on the value of additional bilateral security relationships - hopefully with those countries that stood with them in OIF.
FORD